

Guided Play Instructions for Home

Please direct questions to Michele Lobo at malobo@udel.edu,
or 302-831-8526

- Please perform the guided play for a total of 60 minutes each day.
- Have your baby wear the P-WREX while performing the play activities.
- Attach the bands on the P-WREX as instructed.
- You may perform all 60 minutes of play at one time or you may break it up into shorter periods, no less than 5 minutes each.
- Play should be performed when your baby is awake and alert but not crying.
- The goal of the play is for you to teach your baby how to move his arms better and to reach for and explore objects. You will do this by helping your baby engage in play activities that have been shown to improve these abilities.
- Perform these activities with your baby seated.
- Each day after play, please take a couple of minutes to complete the daily intervention log sheet.
- You can make this play time more fun for you and your baby by talking, singing, or playing music with your baby during the activities.
- Supervise your baby closely and interact with your baby to encourage him/her during all activities.

I. General Movement Play with a Toy (20 minutes)

Why will you perform this activity with your baby?

In this play activity, you will provide your baby opportunities to control movement and sound from a toy by tethering his/her wrist to the toy as it hangs, floats, or is held where he can see it. Babies as young as 1-2 months old can learn that their body movements can control a toy in this type of play situation. This is an activity that typically makes young babies happy and encourages them to move their arms more. When babies move their arms more they learn to better control their arm movements for other behaviors and get better at skills like reaching for toys.

How to Perform General Movement Activities

- Movement to control a toy:
 - Use soft ribbon to tether your infant's wrist(s) to a toy that will make noise and/or move in interesting ways when he waves and flaps his arm(s).
- Movement to explore the arm's movement abilities:
 - Use elastic band to tether your infant's wrist(s) to a spring attached to the overhead frame to provide enough movement to create a "Johny Jump Up Toy" effect for the arm(s).
 - Allow your child to explore how he can swing and bounce his arm(s).
 - If this alone does not entice your child to move a lot, you can add toys that move and/or make sound to increase his movement and exploration.

Aim to perform these for a total of 20 minutes with each arm tethered at least 10 minutes or both arms tethered for 20 minutes.

II. Reaching Play (20 minutes)

Why will you perform this activity with your baby?

In this play activity, you will provide you baby opprtunities to reach for and explore toys hanging on the toy frame. Babies typically begin reaching in the first 6 months of life. Parents have an important role in teaching babies to reach by setting up toys within their reach, helping them get to toys, giving them praise for their attempts to play with toys, and participating in toy play with them. Young babies are driven to get to toys and are typically happy and attentive once they are able to reach for and play with toys.

How to Perform Reaching Activities

- Reaching at chest height:
 - Don the P-WREX.
 - Hold a toy that your child could grasp in his hand in line with the middle of his body at his chest height and encourage him to lift his arms so they are parallel with the floor and contacting the toy.
 - Perform this for 5 minutes with each hand.
- Reaching across different locations:
 - Allow your baby opprtunities to reach for toys in different locations (the same locations from the reaching location assessment).
 - Provide your baby 10 seconds to try to reach for the toy in each location.

- If he does not try or succeed in touching the toy, then help him bring his hand to that location and feel the toy for a few seconds.
- Then allow him another chance to try and reach it.
- Again, help him if he was unable.
- Repeat this 3 times for that location.
- Then move to the next location.
- Continue to move through the nine locations until 10 minutes have passed.

These will be tiresome and challenging activities for your baby. You can change the toys frequently as needed to keep his attention. You can also break this down into smaller time periods if he appears to fatigue.

III. Looking, Mouthing, and Feeling Play (10 minutes)

Why will you perform this activity with your baby?

In this play activity, you will provide you baby opprtunities to explore and learn about toys by mouthing them, looking at them, and feeling them. Looking, mouthing, and feeling are important tools babies use to learn about characteristics of objects. Learning about objects is a critical early skill that helps advance infants' cognitive, language, and social skills. Parents can help their babies advance this learning by providing safe opportunities for them to explore a variety of toys. Young babies typically enjoy playing with toys in this manner.

How will you perform this activity with your baby?

- 1) Seat your baby comfortably in a seat or on a surface.
- 2) Place a toy your baby is interested in within his/her palm and wrap his/her fingers around the toy to grasp it. Note that you can use the toys we provide or you can use other similarly sized toys. What is important is that your baby is motivated to explore the toys, the toys are safe, and you use a variety of toys that vary in size, shape, texture, hardness, color, and other properties so your baby gets a wide range of experiences and stays interested. Also note that your baby will be placing toys in his/her mouth during this activity so choose toys that are clean, too large to be swallowed, and without small parts that can break off and be swallowed.
- 3) Encourage your baby to explore the toy by moving the hand holding the toy into his/her view, shaking it, pointing to it, looking at it, and talking about it.
- 4) Allow your baby opportunities to mouth, feel, and look at the toy on his/her own.
- 5) If after 15 seconds, your baby does not demonstrate all three behaviors, looking at the toy, placing the toy in his/her mouth, and feeling the toy with his/her other hand, gently assist your baby in performing these activities.
 - a. First, move his/her hand with the toy so the toy is within his/her view and encourage him/her to look at it for 5 seconds.
 - b. Second, move the hand with the toy to his/her mouth and gently move it along your baby's lips and tongue for 5 seconds so s/he can feel the parts of the toy with his/her mouth.
 - c. Third, move the hand with the toy out of the mouth and into view again. Bring the other hand to the toy and gently move the other hand along the

sides of the toy for 5 seconds so your baby can feel the parts of the toy with the other hand.

- 6) Release your baby's hand and allow another 15 seconds for your baby to explore the toy on his/her own.
- 7) If your baby is actively looking at, mouthing, and feeling the toy without your help, allow him/her to play without your assistance.
- 8) If your baby is not actively looking at, mouthing, and feeling the toy without your help, continue the cycle of providing assistance to look, mouth, and feel the toy after each 15 second waiting period.
- 9) Continue this activity for a total of 10 minutes, 5 minutes with the toys held in the left hand and 5 minutes with the toys held in the right hand. Switch the toy every 1-2 minutes to keep your baby engaged and to let your baby experience a variety of toys.

IV. Play to Promote Elbow Bending (10 minutes)

Why will you perform this activity with your baby?

The ability to bend the arm at the elbow is important for activities like exploration of toys by mouthing and bringing food to the mouth while eating. Children with arm movement impairments often have difficulty bending their arms at the elbow. These activities aim to encourage your baby to learn to bend his arms while engaging in fun play activities.

How will you perform this activity with your baby?

- 1) Seat your baby comfortable and safely in a supportive seat at a surface, i.e. in a high chair with tray or in a booster seat with tray.
- 2) Place toys that are easy and fun to move on the tray in reach of your baby. For instance, you could cover the tray surface with water that is fun to splash in by bending the arms to move the water. You could also place rolling toys like vehicles or rolling pins on the tray surface and encourage your baby to bend his arms to roll them on the surface. Or you could put toys that are fun to bang together or to knock over like individual blocks or block towers on the surface and encourage your baby to bend his arms to bang them or knock them.
- 3) If after 15 seconds your baby does not engage in arm bending for these activities, you can model the activities for your child and encourage him to engage in play. If after another 15 seconds your baby does not imitate the play activity, you can gently assist your child in performing the activity a few times. Then allow your child time to repeat the behavior on his own.
- 4) Repeat these steps for 5 minutes with each arm.
- 5) Change the toys and activity as needed to ensure your baby is interested and motivated.